

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In the latest Office Action, claims 1-6 were rejected. With this amendment, claim 1 is amended, and new claims 7-11 are added. On the basis of the following remarks, consideration of this application and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 were rejected as made obvious by U.S. Patent No. 6,188,752 to Lesley in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0119767 to Fieldhouse et al., and claim 4 was rejected as made obvious by Lesley in view of Fieldhouse, and in further view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0115424 to Bagoren et al.

Claim 1 recites a method for obtaining an account balance of a wireless communication account. In this method, in response to a user selection of a predetermined handset key, a first message that includes a handset identifier and an account identifier is transmitted to an account maintenance system. The handset associated with the handset identifier obtains the account balance by receiving a second message, which includes an account balance for the wireless communication account associated with the account identifier. In this way, a user may obtain an account balance for a wireless communication account by using a handset with which the account is associated.

As amended, the claims specifically recite that the user can check the account balance, as described, *without requiring the user to add value to the account*. This is beneficial in many circumstances, such as where a user desires only to check the balance of a prepaid account without having to pay additional money into the account. Indeed, a use may wish to check an account balance in order to determine whether to replenish the account, which would require the

ability to check the account balance without having to recharge the account. The claimed invention enables an efficient way for the user to do this.

Lesley was cited for the claimed feature of obtaining the account balance at the handset, where the account balance is provided via a message received by the handset. Like Fieldhouse, Lesley describes a system where a user can add value to a prepaid account directly from a handset associated with the account. As the examiner noted, Lesley provides the user with an updated account balance whenever the user adds value to the account. (Lesley, col. 10, lines 15-23.) But this message is a result of the act of replenishing the account, and the message is only sent upon a successful replenishment transaction. Accordingly, Lesley does not allow a user to check an account balance unless the user buys more credits in the account.

The purpose of Lesley's system is to allow users to replenish their accounts, and the reporting function described in Lesley is just part of a final confirmation that the account has been recharged. Lesley is concerned with the problem of recharging an account, not with the problem of checking the remaining value in an account balance. For this reason, Lesley does not disclose providing a user with an account balance *without requiring the user to add value to the account*, as now claimed. Similarly, Fieldhouse and Bagoren are concerned only with allowing a user to recharge the account, not with merely checking an account balance, and neither of these references contemplate providing an account balance without an account recharge transaction.

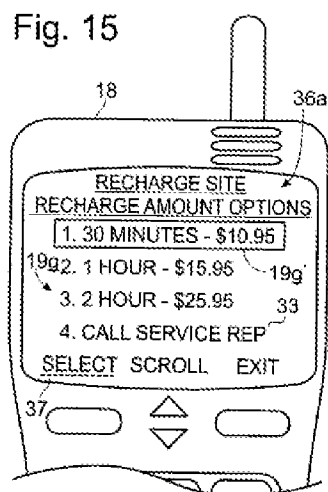
Accordingly, the cited references would not enable the claimed process of allowing users to check their balances without requiring that they pay money to recharge their accounts. Claims 1-8, as amended herein, are therefore patentable over any combination of Lesley, Fieldhouse, and Bargoren.

New claims 7-11 have been added to recite a method of checking an account balance at a handset, where the balance inquiry is initiated by a single keystroke at the handset. As the Abstract explains, this “allows for a single step retrieval of account balance without initiating a connection to a human operator or an automated system.” None of the cited references disclose single step retrieval of an account balance, as claimed.

Applicants note that the Office Action suggests that Fieldhouse discloses, at ¶ 56, “the idea of the button for recharge being a one touch method.” But although Fieldhouse does purport to disclose a method of “one-button recharge,” this term is deceptive as used in Fieldhouse. In fact, Fieldhouse does not enable a user to recharge via a single keystroke. Rather, Fieldhouse directs a user to a website upon the single button selection, after which the user must then navigate a menu in the website and make further selections to achieve the recharge. Fieldhouse explains in ¶ 56:

[T]he user can select the recharge option 19 directly from the top menu by one touch of selector 21c, and be connected to recharge website 36a, shown in FIG. 15. This feature of the invention is referred to as “one-touch recharge” or “one-button recharge.”

This recharge website to which the user is direct is reproduced below:



Once the user presses the first button and is directed to this recharge website, the user would then have to make additional selections from the menu on the website before the recharge will occur.

Therefore, despite Fieldhouse's characterization of the process as "one-button recharge," Fieldhouse clearly does not disclose the step, "receiving at a handset associated with the wireless communication account a user selection, the user selection resulting from a single keystroke and indicating a user's request for an account balance associated with the wireless communication account," as recited in claims 7-11.

Based on the foregoing, the application is in condition for allowance of all claims, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the examiner believes for any reason direct contact would help advance the prosecution of this case to allowance, the examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
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